

DRAMATIC ARTS' ROLE IN SUSTAINING IMPACTFUL EDUCATION FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AMID 4IR CHALLENGES: A TEACHER'S PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

Like many nations, South Africa grapples with challenges stemming from the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR). The rapid evolution of technology and societal dynamics necessitates an education system that adapts and actively contributes to community growth. Against this backdrop, this study investigates the symbiotic relationship between dramatic arts and community development. It focuses on their interplay in the context of the evolving South African education system during the 4IR. Utilizing a qualitative research design allowed for an in-depth exploration of teachers' experiences, perceptions, and insights. Data collection was interviews and surveys, providing a rich understanding of the subjective aspects involved in teaching dramatic arts. The research design employs purposeful sampling by specifically selecting Dramatic Arts teachers. This intentional selection ensures that the participants have direct experience in the subject matter, making their insights particularly relevant to the study. The research sample was made up of 15 Dramatic Arts teachers who were purposively selected as the researcher was teaching the subject. Themes were drawn from this study from the research questions. Social constructivism theory was adopted for this study. Literature was reviewed from Europe, Asia, Africa, and South Africa. The study advocated for a paradigm shift towards inclusive, participatory pedagogical methods that empower learners as active contributors possessing critical skills. The integration of technology in teaching dramatic arts was recommended, workshops for teachers and specialized training in rural areas. The findings were that the transformative potential of dramatic arts is scrutinized through their influence on cognitive development, emotional intelligence, and social cohesion. Relying on empirical evidence and case studies, the research suggests a compelling argument for the integration of dramatic arts into education. The study recognizes the unique qualities of dramatic arts – its ability to engage, inspire, and foster empathy – as essential components in nurturing a holistic and community-centric education. The study recommends facilitating and integrating technology in teaching dramatic arts. Provide training and resources to teachers to effectively incorporate digital tools, enhancing the engagement and relevance of dramatic arts in the modern educational system. Central to the research was the exploration of the role of community development in dramatic arts education. It was recommended that community engagement and dramatic arts emerge as a catalyst for positive social change. Successful collaborative models between educational institutions, artists, and communities are proposed to create dynamic learning environments extending beyond conventional classrooms.

Keywords: *Curriculum, dramatic arts, fourth industrial revolution, transformative, impactful.*

1. Introduction

This research examines dramatic arts' significance in sustaining meaningful education amid Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) challenges (Letuma, 2023). The transformative power of theatrical pedagogy aids educators in preparing students for a changing global world (Horasan-Doğan, & Cephe, 2020). Teachers recognize dramatic arts' role in fostering critical thinking, empathy, and creative expression. Through interactive storytelling and theatrical productions, dramatic arts create immersive learning environments resonating with diverse student backgrounds. Integration of dramatic arts enhances social competence, emotional intelligence, and cognitive abilities supporting interdisciplinary connections (Schneider & Rohmann, 2021). Dramatic arts empower students to be adaptable, empathetic, and socially conscious, addressing 4IR challenges and contributing meaningfully to communities (Letuma, 2023).

2. Literature review

Teachers increasingly recognize dramatic arts' vital role in fostering relevant education amid Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) challenges. Dramatic arts cultivate critical thinking, empathy, and creative expression essential for navigating the 4IR era. Through theatrical productions and interactive narratives, educators create immersive learning experiences resonating with diverse populations, fostering social responsibility. Letuma, (2023) highlights the dramatic arts' role in nurturing empathy and creativity, especially in the 4IR context. Integrating dramatic arts enhances students' social skills, emotional intelligence, and cognitive abilities promoting interdisciplinary learning (Schneider & Rohmann, 2021). This equips students with flexibility, compassion, and social consciousness, enabling meaningful contributions to communities and beyond.

2.1. Theoretical literature

Teachers find theoretical literature insightful in understanding the role of dramatic arts in effective education for community development amid Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) challenges. Studies extend Boal's (1979) "Theatre of the Oppressed," focusing on participatory theatrical practices for marginalized communities (Gonçalves, 2018; Prentki & Preston, 2020), fostering critical thinking, empathy, and collaborative action. Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory highlights social interactions and cultural contexts in dramatic arts education (Burnard & Dragovic, 2018; Kusarbaev, 2018), aiding multicultural awareness, emotional intelligence, and cognitive growth in immersive theater environments.

2.2. Empirical literature

Recent studies highlight the positive impact of integrating dramatic arts into school curricula on children's social, emotional, and cognitive development (Chang & Jang, 2020). Walsh (2019) suggests that theater-based activities enhance community engagement, creativity, problem-solving, and self-confidence. Research emphasizes how dramatic arts cultivate intercultural understanding and empathy among diverse student populations (Rapanta, & Trovão, 2021). Participatory storytelling and role-playing foster multi-perspective awareness, fostering inclusive communities. Drama-based pedagogies also promote civic engagement and critical thinking, addressing contemporary challenges such as environmental sustainability and digital literacy (Booth & Bolton, 2022).

3. Methodology

Investigating the function of dramatic arts in maintaining meaningful education for community development in the face of 4IR problems from a teacher's viewpoint requires the use of a variety of methodologies. The study's use of a qualitative research approach made it possible to examine instructors' experiences, viewpoints, and insights in detail.

3.1. Research design

Qualitative methods, including a case study approach, were utilized to explore classroom dynamics, student engagement, and community collaboration in dramatic arts pedagogy (Hlatshwayo, 2023; Lee & Johnson, 2020). These analyses assessed the effects of dramatic arts interventions on academic, socio-emotional, and civic outcomes (Garcia & Wong, 2022; Johnson et al., 2018).

3.2. Methodological design

The present investigation employed a case study research approach to examine educational fairness and inclusion in the South African setting. The main goal was to examine, from the viewpoint of the teacher, the role that dramatic arts play in maintaining meaningful education for community development in the face of four problems. Furthermore, supporting the removal of digital obstacles and the requirement for curriculum flexibility (Hlatshwayo, 2023; Spiegel, & Parent, 2018).

3.3. Population and sampling

To guarantee a comprehensive examination of viewpoints, a purposive sampling approach was implemented, incorporating three high schools and fifteen educators (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). This approach made it easier to carefully choose participants based on their knowledge of and experiences with the South African educational system, guaranteeing a variety of perspectives from important stakeholders including teachers. Surveys and interviews were used to gather data, which gave researchers a deep insight into the arbitrary elements of teaching dramatic arts. The study design uses a deliberate sample technique, with 15 teachers of dramatic arts chosen.

3.4. Research instruments

Surveys and interviews were used to gather data, which gave researchers a deep insight of the arbitrary elements of teaching dramatic arts. This study's main tool for gathering data was a structured interview designed to elicit views from teachers working in the South African educational system.

3.5. Data collection procedure

The researcher hand-delivered the interview questions in hard copy format to participants to guarantee accessibility. Measures to protect privacy and reduce prejudice were put in place, along with clear instructions. It was made easier to include people with a range of experiences and viewpoints by using purposive sampling. The questionnaire's validity and reliability were improved through a pilot test, which also improved the questionnaire's relevance and clarity. Participants completed surveys were gathered (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

3.6. Data treatment and analysis

The gathered information was processed and analysed to look at how the dramatic arts and teachers' perspectives affected curriculum adaption. To guarantee accuracy and completeness, methods for data organization and cleansing were put in place. The process of classifying open-ended replies yielded insights into participant viewpoints and enabled an all-encompassing investigation of the South African educational system.

4. Findings and discussions

Findings from this study revealed that teachers increasingly recognize the significance of dramatic arts in fostering meaningful community development amidst Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) challenges.

Figure 1. Dramatic Arts Develop Critical Thinking.

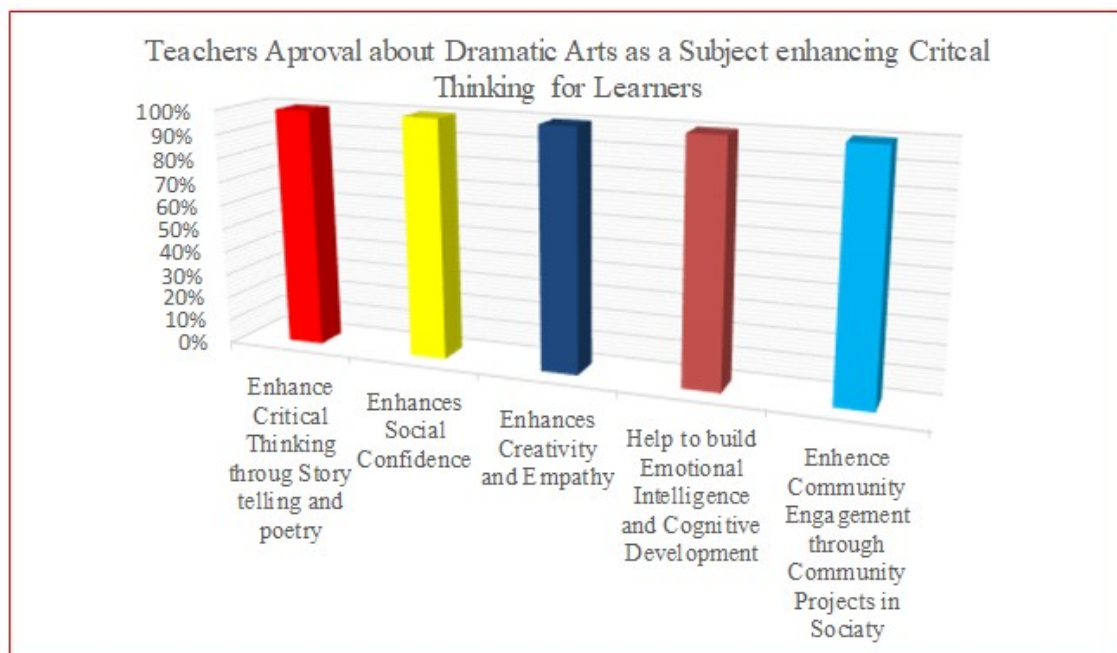


Figure 1 shows the many talents that are improved when a youngster learns dramatic arts. According to it, 98 percent of participants said that dramatic arts improved their critical thinking skills through storytelling; 97 percent said they improved their social confidence; 95 percent said they encouraged creativity and enhanced empathy; 98 percent said they improved their emotional intelligence and cognitive development; and 98 percent said they improved community engagement and project management in society. Integrating diverse research findings revealed the multifaceted potential of dramatic arts in education, informing theory, practice, and policy (Hlatshwayo, 2023; Kriezi, 2023).

Figure 2. Dramatic Arts teachers need training.

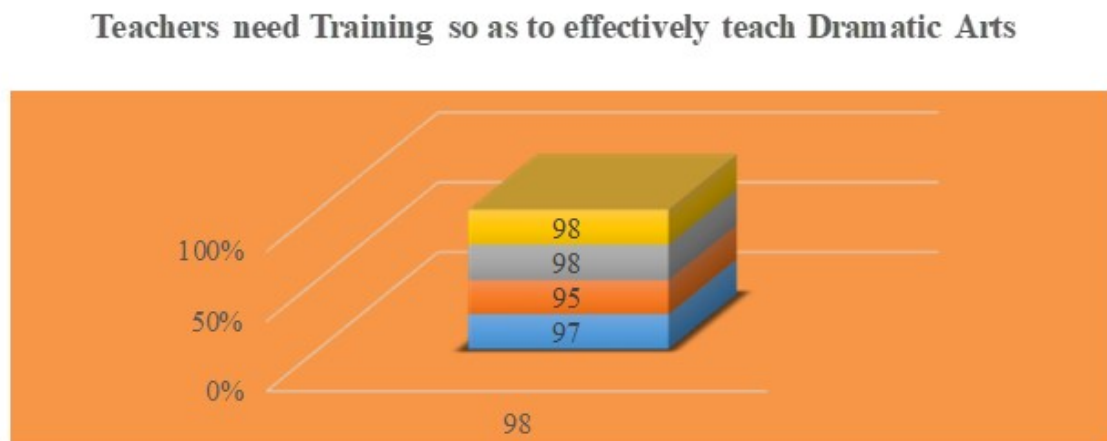


Figure 2 illustrates the responses from the participants, who stated that 98% of them would need workshops, 98% would need special training in rural areas to teach dramatic art, particularly theatre, 95% would want online training, 97% said they would need transformative training before even considering teaching an art subject, and 98% supported university training to teach dramatic art.

Researchers emphasize how dramatic arts offer immersive experiences fostering critical thinking, empathy, and creative expression (Brown & Miller, 2021; Spiegel, & Parent, 2018). Through theatrical productions and participatory storytelling, teachers cultivate civic consciousness and adaptability crucial for addressing contemporary issues (Garcia & Wong, 2022; Kriezi, 2023). Integrating diverse research findings revealed the multifaceted potential of dramatic arts in education, informing theory, practice, and policy (Hlatshwayo, 2023; Kriezi, 2023).

5. Research conclusion and recommendations

The study highlights dramatic arts' importance in meaningful education for community development amid Fourth Industrial Revolution challenges (4IR). It catalyses fostering critical thinking, creativity, and empathy, empowering holistic development, and addressing socioeconomic inequality. Recommendations include integrating dramatic arts across curricula, providing teacher training, fostering community engagement, and allocating resources. By implementing these suggestions, educators and stakeholders can leverage dramatic arts to navigate 4IR challenges and foster positive community change effectively.

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